2: Henry E-5 (1932-1934) 1941
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of it, or he carefully chops out the root or log until the path is clear; he never leaves a rough edge.

The forest has certain little peculiarities whose marks the Indians recognize when they see one of their number come back from the hunt with a bloody eye or a mass of little cuts on his legs. There is a kind of bamboo that the Indians call *kotkólo* which hangs like a vine from trees and whose mark on the human body is so specific that the Indians can always tell when one of them has fallen foul of it. *Kotkólo* has a surface like sandpaper and a long thorn that curves slightly upward like a tiny scimitar. If you escape the thorn the surface may rasp across your face and leave a stinging welt. There is also a tall strong grass that grows in the open places the Indians love so well and that cuts like a knife. No one dares just walk through it; the feet must swing out like scythes to beat it down.

The Indians are acutely aware of their mountain forests as something with which they have to struggle and which is full of pain for them. The forest is a mass of vines and thorns that cut and trip; it is alive with insects that suck and torment; and they make no bones about saying so. They divide the forest into "clean places," those in which there are no vines, thorns, or bamboo,—they also call them "pretty places"—and "dirty places," where the tangle is so thick that it obscures the light of day.

In the winter these mountain forests are cold and nights are gray with the mist that rises from the watercourses. The temperature often drops below freezing at night, and not even the thickest clothing will keep out the cold and damp. Yet for generations the only clothing the Indians had was a knee-length netlike robe of plant fiber, worn about the waist by the women, and a closely woven shirt of the same material, reaching to the hips, worn by the men in the winter. When they began to raid the Brazilians they stole vests and blankets and it was common to see an Indian naked except for a little belt around his waist to tie up his penis—and a vest. The vest kept the torso warm while it allowed freedom of motion to the arms. The Kaingáng never do anything more with an animal skin than make soup of it, and before they had blankets and vests they simply spread a few fern fronds on the ground at night and lay down on them to sleep, pulling a net-like robe over themselves if they were so fortunate as to possess one.

On winter nights they are miserable and often get up to warm themselves by the fire. One morning in May as I warmed my aching joints by the fire and watched my breath spiral upward, Chukembégn said to me: "Last night I slept all over the place. It was so cold nobody slept." Sometimes they fall asleep sitting by the fire, their arms on their drawn-up knees, their heads sunk forward. The scarcity of blankets brings the young men together in the sleeping parties they love, when a half dozen of them,

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63 wrapped in each other's arms, lie under a couple of blankets. Children
374 sleep almost anywhere that they can crawl under a blanket, and any solitary sleeper welcomes warm flesh that will help to shelter him against the cold. If children were not welcome sleeping companions it would go hard with them in families where scarcity of blankets would leave them absolutely unprotected.

261 The Kaingáng are hungry in winter and early spring. Then the tracks of animals are hard to interpret and the tapir can run far and fast, for it is no longer burdened with its young and the forest is cool. To the Kaingáng the tapir is not only the most important food, it is the very symbol of food. When they have no tapir meat there is very little meat of any kind, for the tapir is most plentiful when the wild fruits and nuts are ripe, and when these are gone the monkeys and birds, the rodents and pigs, the deer and the tapir that have fed on them for months, grow scarce or vanish altogether. Many primitive people who are faced with this seasonal scarcity have developed some technique of preservation, but not so the Kaingáng.
[257] They preserve only pine nuts and have nothing to support them in these times of hunger.

132 Summer, with its warmth, its dryness, and its plenty, brings comfort at last to these people who sew no skins and make no warm clothes against the winter, who have no knowledge of boats or rafts to carry them across the rivers that lie everywhere around them, and who, in a hungry land, preserve no food and make no traps. If necessity were the mother of invention the Kaingáng would have all these things, which would make their life easier. If people systematically adapted themselves to their environment the Kaingáng would not only be dogged and skillful hunters, but they would have the traps and the fishing techniques which they completely lack. The men would not only be untiring, uncomplaining providers, but they would have discovered how to preserve the food they obtain with so much effort, so that in the lean days of winter they would not grow weak and retch and vomit with hunger.

142 The Kaingáng are powerful and of tough physique.[1] The arms and legs
[147] of the full-grown men are thick and muscular, and the women, although shorter and less conspicuously muscular, are strong enough to carry heavy loads. Their hair is straight and black, their dark-brown eyes wide and level, their noses high-bridged and coarse, their lips thick. Their skin color ranges from a deep brown to a golden tan. Sometimes a sick person who has lain a long time by the fire, away from the sun, may be practically white. The men, who are about as tall as the average white European, are graceful in spite of their massiveness. It is a pleasure to see them walk—the tangled forest has never let them learn to run—with their high springing

[1] They have very bad teeth.